

we will be. I felt very good about the telephone conversation I had with President Yeltsin.

I think—they're also very upset with the Serbs. They feel that they had a clear commitment to back out of Gorazde, not to endanger the U.N. forces there. And yesterday President Yeltsin made a very good statement about saying the Serbs should withdraw from Gorazde to a certain distance and that the U.N. forces should go back in. And my own view is that we have a chance to have a common policy.

The President's News Conference

April 20, 1994

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to begin by saying that I want to join all the American people as Hillary and I pray for the health and the recovery of President Nixon. I want to again say how much I have appreciated the wise counsel he has given me on the question of Russia and many other issues since I have been President.

I spoke with a member of his family just a few moments ago, and I did speak with Reverend Billy Graham shortly after President Nixon was admitted to the hospital when Reverend Graham was on the way to the hospital. And I have nothing public to report about that, except to say that his condition remains serious, and I hope he will be in the prayers of all Americans.

Over the last several days, the situation in Gorazde has become increasingly grim. The Serb forces have broken their own truce agreements, persisted in brutal attacks on civilians, United Nations personnel, and NATO forces protecting those personnel. These events are clearly a setback for the momentum achieved in recent months. The NATO ultimatum brought a reprieve to Sarajevo: humanitarian routes were reopened, agreements between Muslims and Croats changed the balance of power on the ground and offered new diplomatic opportunity.

There are reports that the Serbs have released more U.N. personnel and returned heavy weapons seized from U.N. control near Sarajevo, and they are welcome. But the imperative now is not only to address the latest Serb trans-

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:42 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, French President François Mitterrand, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and evangelist Billy Graham. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

gressions, it is to renew the momentum toward peace.

Let me be clear about our objective. Working with our allies, the Russians, and others, we must help the warring parties in Bosnia to reach a negotiated settlement. To do that, we must make the Serbs pay a higher price for continued violence so it will be in their own interests, more clearly, to return to the negotiating table. That is, after all, why we pushed for NATO's efforts to enforce a no-fly zone and the Sarajevo ultimatum and to provide close air support for U.N. forces who come under attack.

In pursuit of that policy, we must take further action. Therefore, the United States has today undertaken the following initiatives:

First, we are proposing to our NATO allies that we extend the approach used around Sarajevo to other safe areas, where any violations would be grounds for NATO attacks. I have insisted that NATO commit itself to achievable objectives. NATO's air power alone cannot prevent further Serb aggressions or advances or silence every gun. Any military expert will tell you that. But it can deny the Serbs the opportunity to shell safe areas with impunity.

Second, we will work with others to pursue tighter sanctions through stricter enforcements. The existing sanctions on Serbia have crippled Serbia's economy. In light of recent events, there must be no relief.

Third, we are taking other steps to relieve suffering and support the peace process. We are offering the United Nations assistance in addressing the humanitarian crisis that is now

severe in Gorazde. And we expect the Security Council to take up a resolution authorizing additional U.N. peacekeepers, which we will support.

These steps support our intensive work, along with others, to secure a negotiated settlement.

I have just spoken at some length with President Yeltsin, as well as with President Mitterrand. I spoke earlier today with Prime Minister Chretien. I have not yet spoken with Chancellor Kohl or Prime Minister Major today. I have attempted to do so, but I have spoken with them in the last couple of days about this important issue. President Yeltsin and I agreed to work closely together to pursue peace in Bosnia. President Mitterrand expressed his agreement with the general approach.

I was very encouraged by President Yeltsin's statement yesterday, calling on the Serbs to honor their commitments, insisting that they withdraw from Gorazde and that they resume talks and that they permit U.N. personnel to return to Gorazde.

I think you can look forward to a major diplomatic initiative coming out of our common efforts, but I cannot discuss the details of the outlines of that with you at this moment because we have agreed, all of us, that our foreign ministers need to talk and flesh out the details before we say exactly what approach we will take. The telephone conversations themselves were an insufficient basis for the kind of specific detailed approach that I think would be required.

In any case, it is clear that our test of Serb intent must be their actions, not their words. Those words have often proved empty.

Let me reiterate what I have said often before. The United States has interests at stake in Bosnia: an interest in helping to stop the slaughter of innocents; an interest in helping to prevent a wider war in Europe; an interest in maintaining NATO as a credible force for peace in the post-cold-war era and in helping to stem the flow of refugees. These interests justify continued American leadership and require us to maintain a steady purpose, knowing that there will be difficulties and setbacks and that in this world where we have a set of cooperative arrangements, not only with NATO but with the United Nations, there will often be delays that would not be there were we acting alone or in a context in which our security were more immediately threatened.

Ultimately, this conflict still must be settled by the parties themselves. They must choose

peace. The agreement between the Croatians and the Muslims was a very important first step, but there is so much more to be done. By taking firm action consistent with our interests, the United States and our NATO allies can, and must, attempt to influence that choice.

Thank you. Go ahead.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, did President Yeltsin raise any objections to this expanded use of NATO air power? And are all the NATO allies on board on this, such as Britain and Canada?

The President. Well, first of all, we are still involved in our consultations about it. Secondly, I don't think I can commit President Yeltsin to a course until he sees our proposal in writing.

I can tell you, in general, what he said, however, which was that he agreed that the present understandings for air power were ineffective and that the Serbs plainly violated their agreement and overreached in Gorazde, something he's already said publicly. But he feels, as everyone does, that over the long run, NATO air power alone will not settle this conflict; this conflict will have to be settled by negotiations.

Let me tell you the argument I made to him and the argument I want to make to you, because I know a lot of you have been as frustrated as have we by what happened in Gorazde.

We have, through NATO, three separate authorizations for the use of air power, and air power has been used under two of those three. And arguably, the possibility of air power has been successful under two of those three, but they're not the same.

Authorization number one is to enforce the no-fly zone. We have done that and planes have been shot down, as you know. And I think the no-fly zone clearly has been successful in preventing the war from spreading further into the air and the slaughter from coming from the airplanes.

Option number two was the Sarajevo option. That is, a safe zone was created around Sarajevo, and all heavy weapons either had to be withdrawn from the safe zone or turned over to United Nations personnel. Then any heavy weapons shelling within the Sarajevo safe zone by anybody could trigger NATO air strikes. There were no NATO air strikes under that, but it clearly worked, and it was clearly more enforceable.

Option number three is what you saw at Gorazde. Option number three gives the United Nations commander the authority to ask for United Nations civilian approval to ask for NATO air support to support the U.N. forces on the ground when they're under duress.

Now, consider what the difference is between that and the Sarajevo option and all the conflicts that came along. First of all, you have to go through the approval process, which came quickly the first time when the NATO planes went in, the United States planes, and took the first action. But then you have to keep coming back for that approval. And you're always subject to an argument about who started what fight and what the facts were. And then what happened to us in Gorazde was, if an assault results in having the NATO forces close at hand with the aggressing forces or if NATO forces are captured, then any use of air power may lead to the killing of the very people we're there trying to protect. Whereas under the Sarajevo model, you can just say, "Okay, here's the safe zone. All the heavy weaponry has to be withdrawn or put under U.N. control, and if there's any violation by anybody, there can be air action." It is a much clearer thing.

That is a point I made very strongly to President Yeltsin. I think he was quite sympathetic with it. His only point was the same point that everyone makes, which is that in the end, the use of air power by NATO cannot bring this war to an end. Only a negotiated settlement can do that. I think that, generally, you will see the United States and Russia working together, and I've been impressed by how aggressive the Russians have been with regard to the Serbs in this.

Yes, go ahead. I'll take it.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that now the Serbs should be prepared for strategic air strikes, as well as tactical, that you would need to go after their supply lines or their ammo dumps? And secondly, are you also pressing the allies to try to lift the arms embargo, as many in Congress are demanding?

The President. Let me answer the first question first by simply saying that I do not think it is appropriate for me to discuss the tactical details of our policy—not ever probably—but certainly not until they have been worked out with our allies. We have to do that through NATO.

Secondly, as you know, I have always favored lifting the arms embargo. And I am glad that there is so much support for it in the Congress now from—much of it coming from people who've not said it before. And I think that's encouraging. But many of them are saying that somehow we should not be in a cooperative effort with the United Nations and NATO but instead should just, on our own, lift the arms embargo, make sure the arms get there, and then, with no danger to ourselves we can permit these people to fight against their own abuses. That has a great deal of appeal. There are certain practical problems with it.

First, I would say that if we ignore a United Nations embargo because we think it has no moral basis or even any legal validity but everyone else feels contrary, then what is to stop our United Nations allies from ignoring embargoes that we like, such as the embargo against Saddam Hussein? How can we ever say again to all of the other people in the United Nations, you must follow other embargoes? That's a serious question for me because there are a lot of things that we want to do through the United Nations.

Secondly, what are the practical problems with raising the arms embargo? Do the Croats, who now have this agreement with the Muslims, support it? Will it be facilitated? How long would it take to get there? Would that increase Serb aggression in the short run while we're waiting for the arms to be delivered? There are a lot of practical problems with it. Do I favor lifting it? I do. Do I believe the allies with whom we are working now would vote to support it? I don't. Will there be continuing discussions about it? Yes, there will. I will say this: I think the more the Serbs turn away from this opportunity for peace, the more the allies are likely to be willing to vote to raise the arms embargo. But I don't think they're there right now.

Yes, Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News].

Q. President Clinton, it seems as though, frequently, you have characterized this as a civil war; yet the Serbs seem to be the main aggressors here. How would you define the Serbs for the American people? Are the Serbs villains in this piece?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it is a civil war in the sense that people who live within the confines of a nation we have recognized are fighting each other for territory and

power and control. So in that sense, it is clearly a civil war.

I have always felt that the Serbs were the primary aggressors, even though at various times there have been three different factions fighting, and at various times in various specific instances, you could make an argument that the Serbs were not always the initiators of a particular aggression.

The Serbs have gotten a lot of what they wanted, which was more territory to create a greater Serbia in areas where Serbs were ethnically either exclusively occupying the territory or dominant. And so I've always felt that they were the primary problem there. But in the end, there's going to have to be an agreement. Not very long ago, I would remind you, the parties didn't seem too far apart on an agreed-upon territorial division, and then this fighting resumed, I think, with quite unfortunate consequences.

Q. Are you reluctant to condemn the Serbs' behavior?

The President. No, I've been condemning their behavior for 2 years now. And let me just say this: I think—you asked me in general terms—in general terms do I consider them to be the primary aggressor? The answer to that is yes.

More specifically, and far more importantly, were they wrong in Gorazde? Yes, terribly wrong. What is their defense? That the Muslims shot at them. Did they overreact to that, even if it's true? Unbelievably. Does that justify shelling a hospital, shelling the U.N. headquarters, taking United Nations hostages when we have never been involved in the war against them, when all we did was to do what we said we would do all along, which is if they threatened our people, we would use air power? They are the complete aggressors and wrongdoers in the case of Gorazde.

Q. [Inaudible]—suggesting there is some reluctance to support air strikes in the House?

Q. Is it too late for Gorazde?

The President. Is it too late for Gorazde? No, it's too late for—you know, a lot of people have been killed there. But if the Serbs would do what the Russians demanded, as well as what we demand, if they would get out, withdraw, let the United Nations come back in, and then we could resume the aggressive humanitarian relief effort that we have offered to help in, it would not be too late for Gorazde in the

sense that it could be restored as a genuine safe area and the town could be safe.

Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News].

Q. Nothing that you are proposing today is intended to deal specifically with Gorazde, is it? And just a second thing is, have you thought through what you would propose to do if your attempt to recreate the Sarajevo model elsewhere does not deter the Serbs and they keep coming, much as they did at Gorazde?

The President. Let me answer your first question first. Our proposal would create Sarajevo-like conditions, that is, sort of safe zones around all the safe areas, including Gorazde. So we would assume that as a part of this, if our allies will agree with us, that any heavy weaponry, any heavy firing in and around that area would be subject to the same action as Srebrenica or any other safe zone.

So, that's that. The second question is, have I thought about what would happen if this doesn't work? I have. But I think we should stick with this policy, and if the Serbs continue their aggression in an irresponsible way, then there are other things that can be done. I have given a lot of thought to it, but I don't want to talk about it now. I want to talk about this policy.

Go ahead, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Admiral Frank Kelso

Q. Mr. President, you've had a lot of other things on your mind besides this war. Would you please do something about Admiral Kelso? Can you veto that bill that gives him pay for four stars when all he needs is pay for two? And that is in the traditions of the past. The military men only got their own regular pay. They didn't have to go to Congress and get paid for two more stars. That's spending Government money that we can't afford now.

The President. No, that's not what happened.

Q. If he didn't know what was going on in Tailhook, then he should have known because he's head of naval operations.

The President. Well, the—I agree with the decision made by the Pentagon and ratified by the Senate. So I can't agree to do it because I agree with it.

Q. Why do you agree with it because—why do you agree with spending more money on this man's salary?

The President. Because I believe—because I disagree with you. I believe the evidence does not condemn the conduct or knowledge of Admiral Kelso sufficient to justify taking the two stars away from him.

Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, can I just follow up on this Sarajevo model? How long will it take, in your opinion, in your military advisers' opinions to (A) expand this model to protect the five other safe areas, especially because you say you need another U.N. Security Council resolution? So it seems that that process could take a long time.

The President. Well, no, no. We believe that the United Nations has the authority under Resolution 836 to do this or that you could have a Presidential statement from the head of the Security Council. There are lots of ways to do it.

Q. But in terms of expanding the U.N. personnel who are required—

The President. We believe that what's been lacking there is just an agreement on how many

more people, where they'll come from, and how the money will be provided. But General Rose has wanted 10,000 more. There was agreement among those of us who contribute but do not provide troops but who provide money, for something like 3,700 more recently. And my announcement today should be read as our willingness to play a major role in contributing to a larger peacekeeping force.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to put U.S. troops in?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President's 55th news conference began at 4:49 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to evangelist Billy Graham; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; President François Mitterrand of France; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany; Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Adm. Frank B. Kelso II, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, Commander of U.N. Forces in Bosnia.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Embargo on Haiti

April 20, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Six months ago I provided you with my initial report on the deployment of U.S. Naval Forces in the implementation of the petroleum and arms embargo of Haiti. I am now providing this further report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to inform the Congress about the status of the U.S. contribution to the ongoing U.N. embargo enforcement effort.

In response to the continued obstruction by the military authorities of Haiti to the dispatch of the U.N. Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and their failure to comply with the Governors Island Agreement, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 875 (October 16, 1993). This resolution called upon Member States "to use such measures commensurate with the specific circumstances as may be necessary" to ensure strict implementation of the Haitian embargo on petroleum and arms and

related material imposed by United Nations Security Council Resolutions 841 and 873 (1993). Under U.S. command and control, and acting in concert with allied navies and in cooperation with the legitimate Government of Haiti, U.S. Naval Forces began maritime interception operations on October 18, 1993, in order to ensure compliance with the embargo terms.

Since that time, U.S. Naval Forces have continued enforcement operations in the waters around Haiti, including at times in the territorial sea of that country. The Haiti maritime interception operations generally have employed up to six U.S. surface naval combatants serving on station in the approaches to Haitian ports. The maritime interception force has been comprised of naval units and supporting elements from the United States, Argentina, Canada, France, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.